[Translation]

Financial Assistance by NSSIC

4611. SHRI RAJESH RANJAN ALIAS PAPPU YADAV: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Small Scale Industries Corporation provided financial assistance to some new units during 1994-95 in Bihar;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to enlarge the scope of National Small Scale Industries Corporation;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During the year 1994-95, the National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) Ltd. has provided financial assistance to 25 new units for a total amount of Rs. 137.20 lakhs.

(c) to (e). Enlarging the scope of NSIC is within the purview of Board of Management. Recently, NSIC has drawn up a 10 year Corporate Plan outlining its activities, beginning from 1997.

Capital Investment

4612. PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the total capital invested in Central Public Sector Undertakings as on date;

(b) the total number of employees working in these undertakings; and

(c) the percentage of profit earned during 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 and the additional capital invested during the above years in the Public Sector Undertakings?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) As on 31.3.95, upto which period audited information is available, the capital invested in Central Public Sector Undertakings was Rs. 172438 crores.

(b) The total number of regular employees working in these PSUs was 20.41 lakhs.

(c) The percentage of profit earned during 1993-94 and 1994-95, to capital employed is given in Statement No. 10 of Volume-I of Public Enterprises Survey 1993-94 and 1994-95 laid in Parliament on 22.3.95 and 19.7.96 respectively. The additional capital invested during 1993-94 and 1994-95 was Rs. 17373 crores and Rs. 7478 crores respectively.

New Direct Tax Law

4613. SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH:
SHRI CHHATAR SINGH DARBAR:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to constitute a group of experts to suggest the recommendations to simplify the direct tax law;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the expert group will start functioning?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. The Government has set up an expert group with a view to rationalising and simplifying the Income-tax Act, 1961 to rewrite a new Direct Tax law.

(c) The expert group has started functioning and has been asked to submit its draft report by 31st December, 1996.

[English]

Import Duty on Coal

4614. DR. M.P. JAISWAL: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Expert Committee has recommended for lowering of import duty on coal from 30 per cent to 5 per cent;

(b) if so, whether the Government has accepted the recommendations of the Expert Committee;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the extent up to which it is likely improve growth of coastal cement plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) The Ministry of Industry (Deptt. of Industrial Policy & Promotion) have intimated that the Development Council for cement industry and the Task Force on Cement Industry for the Ninth Five year plan constituted by the Planning Commission have recommended lowering of import duty on coal from 35 per cement to 5 per cent.

(b) to (d). In the Budget for 1996-97, presented before the Parliament, no specific proposal has been made for concessional import duty on coal being imported by cement plants. However, the import duties on import of non-coking coal for all consumers, including those of the cement sector, has been reduced from 35% to 20%. This shall reduce the cost of imported coal for the consumers, including the cement plants located at coastal locations.

[Translation]

Capital Invested in Small Scale Units

4615. SHRI RAJESH RANJAN ALIAS PAPPU YADAV: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the contribution of the small scale units in the industrial development of the country is increasing for the last many years;

(b) if so, the percentage thereof during the last three years, year-wise;

(c) whether the capital invested in small scale sector is less as compared to the total investment made in the industrial sector in the country; and

(d) if not, the percentage of the capital invested in small scale sector during each of the year 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 separately?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The contribution of the small scale sector in industrial production for the years 1992-93, 1993-94 and 1994-95 was 40.70%, 40.71% and 41.27% respectively.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

[English]

Trade with U.S.

4616. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the current status of Indo-U.S. trade and details of total exports and imports during each of the last three years;

(b) whether the Government have identified any barriers that impede the expansion of Indo-U.S. trade;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken to remove these barriers;

(d) the details of projections for Indo-U.S. trade during the next three years; and

(e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to achieve these targets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) The Indo-U.S. trade during the last 3 years was as follows:-

(Value in Rs. Crores)

Year	Exports	Imports	Bilateral Trade	Balance of Trade
1993-94	12543.88	8599.85	21143.73	(+) 3944.03
1994-95	15764.32	9123.61	24887.93	(+) 6640.71
1995-96	18457.54	12805.25	31262.79	(+) 5652.29

(Source: DGCI & S. Calcutta)

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The barriers include textile quotas, anti-dumping and countervailing duties, standards relating to health and environment etc. These are taken up bilaterally with the USA to ensure that market access is not unreasonably hindered. In case of any inconsistency or discrimination, India has a right to approach the WTO dispute settlement mechanism for redressal.

(d) India's trade with the USA is likely to grow in line with India's overall trade growth.

(e) In order to expand the Indo-US trade, there have been increased bilateral interactions both in Government and Private Sector. These include the visit by the Indian Prime Minister to the USA in May, 1994; US Commerce Secretary's visit to India in January, 1995; Indian Commerce Minister's visit to the USA in June 1995; the meeting of Indo-US Economic and Commercial Sub-Commission in April, 1995 in Delhi; the meeting of the Indo-US Business Council in October, 1994 in Washington and December, 1995 in Delhi; launching of Indo-US Commercial Alliance in January, 1995. Similar bilateral interactions are likely to continue in future also.

Withdrawal from Provident Funds

4617. SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to allow industrial units to draw funds from unutilized provident funds;

(b) the total quantum of such funds available at present;